BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Interprovincial Trade

- **Services made up 64% of BC's exports to other provinces in 1996**. BC's most important interprovincial export was transportation services, which accounted for $2.3 billion of the province's $13.6 billion in total exports to the rest of Canada. The province's position on the west coast of the country is a major factor contributing to the importance of its transportation service exports. Other major export categories include wholesale services ($1.7 billion), financial services ($1.1 billion) and personal services ($1.0 billion). In comparison, lumber, sawmill, and wood products, BC's most important commodity exports, accounted for $0.6 billion of BC's total sales to the rest of Canada.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 15-546-XPE

- **British Columbia has consistently had the highest interprovincial trade deficit of any province.** In 1996, the province's trade deficit with the rest of Canada was $8.6 billion, most of which was due to a $6.5 billion deficit with Ontario. Other important trading partners for BC include Quebec (-$1.5 billion) and Alberta (-$0.8 billion). BC's imports of goods and services from Atlantic Canada also exceed its exports. However, the province is a major supplier of goods and services to the Yukon.

  Source: SC, Catalogue 15-546-XPE

Department Store Sales

- **Department store sales in British Columbia and the two territories increased 8.0% during 1997.** This compares to a 10.3% increase at the national level. In the rest of the country, growth rates ranged from 7.6% in New Brunswick to 14.0% in Alberta.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Motor Vehicle Sales

- **BC sales of cars, vans and trucks were 14.4% higher in 1997 than in the previous year.** The increase in the number of vehicles sold in the province was the first since 1994. Relatively modest price gains (+2.6%, compared to a national average of 4.7%) helped boost vehicle sales in BC. Vehicle sales have been booming in all parts of the country. Newfoundland (+29.5%), Alberta (+25.4%) and New Brunswick (+20.2%) all posted gains in excess of twenty percent. Nationally, sales were up 18.2%. BC's relatively strong growth of 14.4% was the lowest in the country.

  For the second straight year, truck and van sales in the province outnumbered car sales. There were 89,788 trucks and vans sold in BC last year, compared to 74,638 cars. In 1981, two-thirds of the new vehicles sold in BC were cars.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued its steady downward spiral in December.** Vancouver's new housing price index (NHPI) was 3.3% lower in December than in the same month of 1996. In Victoria, the NHPI fell 1.3%. The Canadian NHPI was 1.3% higher than in December 1996, largely due to a rejuvenated market in the Toronto area. The largest year-over-year increase was in Calgary, where new house prices rose an average of 6.3%.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **MLS sales of existing homes were down 5.5% in 1997.** There were 68,182 homes sold in the province last year, compared to 72,182 in 1996. Sales were also down in Nova Scotia (-9.6%), Saskatchewan (-3.9%) and New

Report **Thriving Cooperatives**

Did you know...?
In 1996, an average of 153 children a day were reported missing in Canada

Brunswick (-2.0%), but increased 2.5% overall. The strongest gain was in Alberta, where existing home sales were up 16.6% in 1997.

Source: Canadian Real Estate Association

Film Industry

- **Last year, 167 film and TV productions were completed in BC.** Twenty-four feature films were produced in BC, including *Seven Years in Tibet, Kundun* (portions of which were shot in BC) and *Eaters of the Dead*, a Walt Disney production. Also shot in BC were 53 TV movies/pilots, 20 TV series, 9 animations and 61 documentaries. Film production has more than doubled since 1992, when 61 films (excluding documentaries), with a total production budget of $368 million, were shot in the province.

  Source: BC Film Commission data

- **The province's film industry had a total production budget of just under a billion dollars ($933 million) in 1997.** Of this total, about $631 million was spent in BC. Most (108) of the made in BC productions were Canadian. There were 59 foreign films produced in the province, 8 of which were features. Nine foreign TV series were produced in British Columbia last year.

  Source: BC Film Commission data

BC Ferries

- **Passenger traffic on BC Ferries was down 4.7% in January, with 1.2 million people using the ferry system, compared to 1.3 million in January 1997.** Vehicle traffic was also down, declining 8.2% to 463,000 vehicles.

  Source: BC Ferry Corporation Data

Public Transit Usage

- **Last year, 153 million paying passengers used the province's public transit system.** This was 1.7% more than in 1996, when 150 million revenue passengers travelled with BC Transit. In the Vancouver area, passenger traffic increased 1.0% to 124 million, while Victoria's transit system recorded 2.9% more paying passengers than in 1996. Transit usage was up 7.3% in other municipalities which have BC Transit service. Buses in the smaller municipalities carried 11 million paying passengers. (Note: a passenger who travels on more than one bus/train in a single trip is counted only at the point where a fare is paid.) *Source: BC Transit data*

Crime

- **Twenty-eight percent of all reported criminal code offences in 1996 were cleared (either by a charge or by other means).** About 15% were cleared by charge. The clearance rate varied from 17% for property crimes to 69% for violent crimes (crimes against the person). For other types of crimes, the clearance rate was 38%.

  There were 75,600 people charged with crimes in BC during 1996. Of this total, 21% were young offenders and 79% were adults. Young offenders were less likely to be charged with violent crimes than adults. Eighty percent of the criminal offences for which young people were charged were non-violent crimes. This compares to 71% of all charges (both young offenders and adults) in 1996. *Source: Police and Crime Statistics 1987-96, Ministry of Attorney General*

Missing and Abducted Children

- **There were 56,000 cases of Canadian children reported missing in 1996.** Most (78%) of these children were runaways. Another 16% went missing for "unknown" reasons and 2% wandered off or got lost. Other reasons for children being missing included accidents, not reporting back to a detention centre, and abductions, which accounted for less than 1% of the total. About three-quarters (72%) of the missing children were 14 years or older, and 57% were female. *Source: SC, Juristat, Vol 18, No 2*

- **Almost 1,000 Canadian children were abducted in 1996, two-thirds of them by a parent.** There were 15.1 child abductions per 100,000 children (under 16) in 1996. In British Columbia, there were 107 child abductions in 1996, giving the province one of the lowest abduction rates (13.5) in the country. Saskatchewan (31.0), Alberta (20.5), Ontario (17.4) and Manitoba (17.2) all had abduction rates above the national average. The likelihood of abduction was lowest in Quebec, where the rate was 7.7.

  Source: SC, Juristat, Vol 18, No 2

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

February 13, 1998

Co-operative Movement Grows Steadily In British Columbia

Originally published in 3rd Quarter 1997 issue of *Small Business Quarterly*. An annual subscription is $60 + GST

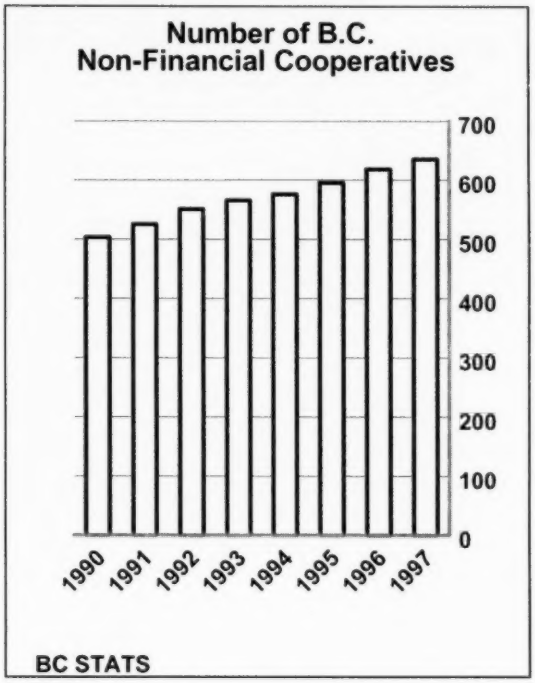
The number of co-operative enterprises in British Columbia has risen steadily in the 1990s as more British Columbians have explored alternative ways to secure the goods and services they need at the prices they can afford. In some cases, they have also provided a means for people to create jobs in their own communities, and to ensure that they stay there.

Co-operatives are autonomous self-help organisations providing services as diverse as day care, car sharing, dairy product marketing, food retailing, financial services (through credit unions), or the provision of housing for co-operative members.

Over half of all co-operatives registered in British Columbia are established to provide housing for their members. Housing co-operatives have been particularly successful in British Columbia and Ontario, where high real estate prices have encouraged innovative approaches to providing low cost housing.

Other co-operatives have been established to provide business services to their member/clients. These are often small businesses operating in the same marketplace as private sector enterprises, but under a different set of rules, and motivated by a different set of incentives. They are sometimes established in circumstances where isolation and/or lack of sufficient private sector competition have encouraged people to provide their own solutions to local problems. For example, a co-operative store may serve a membership in a remote location where it is the only local provider of retail services. In other cases a co-operative may be formed to provide a group of people with specialised products or services that are not readily available through private sector sources.

The numbers of co-operatives of all types have been on the rise in British Columbia for some time. Non-financial co-operatives registered in British Columbia rose 26 per cent, from 503 in 1990 to 635 in 1997. In addition to these there are the credit unions, traditionally tallied separately. The number of credit unions in the province has dropped slightly during the 1990s, mainly as a result of mergers. However, the credit union movement has continued to grow, as indicated by rising numbers of credit union members. Membership in British Columbia credit unions jumped 29 per cent from 1,072,504 people in 1990, to 1,387,761 in 1996. The credit union share of financial business in the province has also grown, although much more slowly. Credit unions held 17 per cent of all personal plus business loans in mid-1997, up from 15 per cent in 1990.



British Columbia Among Provinces With Strongest Co-operative Sectors

British Columbia ranks third behind Saskatchewan and Alberta in terms of non-financial co-operative memberships per capita. Some individuals may be members of more than one co-operative, so that this ratio cannot

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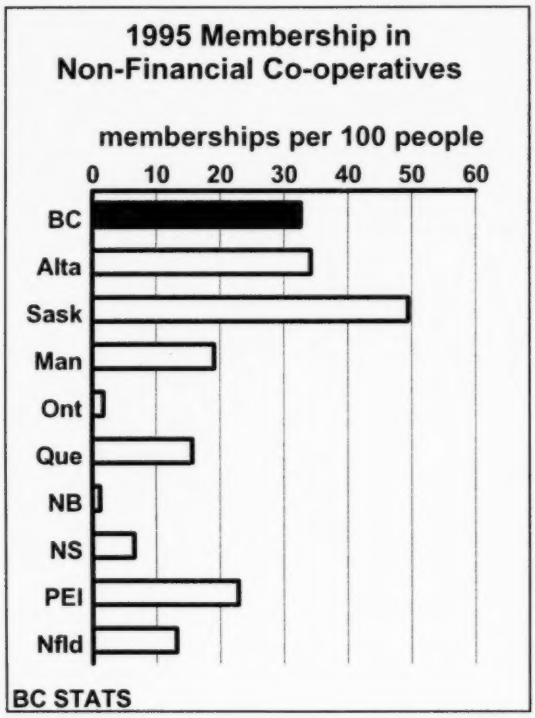
be taken as the proportion of population who are co-operative members. It does, however, indicate the relative strength of the co-operative movement in each province.

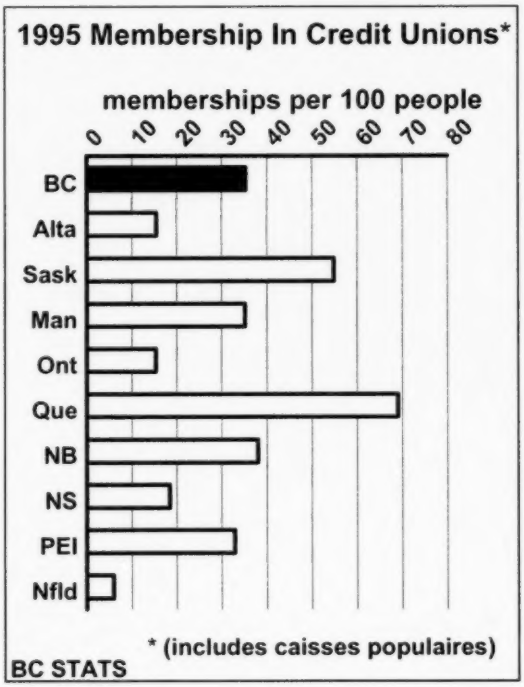


There were an estimated 33 memberships in non-financial co-operatives per 100 British Columbians in 1995. For people over the age of 15, the ratio was 41 per hundred.

British Columbia also ranked among the provinces with the highest rates of credit union membership. There 35 credit union memberships for each hundred residents of the province in 1995. This ratio was higher in only three other provinces. It was 69 per hundred people for Quebec, 55 for Saskatchewan; and 38 for New Brunswick.

Credit union membership has continued to rise in British Columbia. In 1996 it reached 36 per hundred people and 44 per hundred people over the age of 15.

The province is home to the biggest credit union in Canada. Vancouver City Savings, now in its 52nd year, claimed 223 thousand members in 1996, and more than a thousand employees.



British Columbia also boasts one of Canada's most remarkable success stories for a non-financial co-operative. Mountain Equipment Co-operative is a large urban retail operation begun 27 years ago as a tiny shop in Vancouver with a catalogue/mail order department. It has since developed to include large retail stores in Calgary, Toronto and Ottawa. In 1995 it claimed 775 thousand members and 750 employees.

Many Types of Co-operatives

The many types of non-financial co-operatives in British Columbia are grouped for statistical purposes into five main categories.

By far the largest is the service category, including mainly housing co-operatives. Housing co-operatives are by far the most numerous in the province, accounting for 339 of all 635 B.C. non-financial co-operatives in existence at the

end of 1997. Their numbers grew 19 per cent between 1990 and 1996. In 1995, the latest year for which provincial comparisons are possible, there were 3.7 co-operative housing units per 1,000 British Columbians, more than in any province except Ontario with its 3.9 per thousand people

Other British Columbia service co-operatives included 116 engaged in activities ranging from freight operations to agricultural seed cleaning.

Number of B.C. Registered Non-Financial Co-operatives - By Type

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Service								
Housing	285	300	310	319	321	330	337	339
Other	81	82	85	87	93	101	110	116
Consumer	46	47	50	50	50	50	52	55
Supply	8	9	10	11	11	11	11	11
Production	47	51	56	59	61	62	64	65
Marketing	36	36	40	40	40	41	44	49
Total	503	525	551	566	576	595	618	635

Another category of co-operatives were those established to carry out production work. There were 65 of these in 1997, including, for example, agricultural feeder operations, handicraft producers, and wood processing enterprises. Marketing co-operatives numbered 49 in 1997. They included wholesale or retail operations selling fruit, vegetables, and livestock.

Consumer co-operatives numbered 55, including grocery stores, stores providing supplies for students, and other speciality stores.

There were also 11 supply co-operatives, distributing products ranging from agricultural supplies to petroleum products.

A Community Based Business Solution

Co-operatives can offer unique advantages in situations where other types of business organisations either do not exist, or do not meet the needs of a community of potential clients. They have had particularly strong appeal in agricultural areas, where farmers have banded together to market their own products, negotiate their own bulk purchases or to organise communally needed services.

Like private sector companies or incorporated (not for profit) societies, co-operatives limit the liability of individuals involved in the enterprise. But unlike a private sector company, a co-operative's customers are also its owners. This gives member/customers more direct control over what goods or services are provided, and under what terms. This control could include, for example, the ability to retain local jobs and revenues, when they might otherwise be lost to private sector companies based outside the community.

Differences in operating rules between co-operatives, companies, and incorporated societies are summarised in the table below.

Dr. Murray Fulton, a specialist in co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan, observes that the strong prairie co-operative movement had its roots in small isolated communities, with inadequate private sector services. However, he notes that it also had some roots in the Scandinavian and British cultural traditions of many immigrants to that part of Canada. For Quebec, he suggests that cultural isolation and traditions of parish centred communities have encouraged local co-operative enterprises. He links British Columbia's relatively strong co-operative sector to the province's many isolated fishing and forestry communities, and to urban groups sharing common needs and attitudes.

	Co-operative	Company	Society
Objectives	Not for Profit, organized for social and economic gain of members	Profit for shareholders, based on their investment	Activities for purposes other than personal or financial gain
Ownership	By members	By shareholders	By members
Control	Each member is entitled to one vote	Each share is entitled to one vote	As specified in the bylaws
Surplus Profits	Distributed among members	Dividends paid on shares	Surplus remains in society
Liability	Members limited to share subscription	Shares limited to share subscription	Limited to the investment

In some cases members of co-operatives share similar social ideals. These common ideals are sometimes reflected in the commitment of co-operative resources to altruistic goals. Vancouver's Mountain Equipment Co-op, for example, contributes 0.4 per cent of its gross sales to environmental and conservation groups, and has started an endowment fund for future environmental preservation projects. Vancouver City Savings Credit Union transfers a portion of its annual earnings to a community based foundation that funds activities for street kids, a counselling service for prostitutes, and affordable housing for seniors, among other activities.

Recent Feature Articles in *Small Business Quarterly*, Listed By Release Date

August 1997. *Immigrants Boost Self-Employment In British Columbia*

April 1997: *More British Columbia Companies Shift Corporate Charters to Alberta and Ontario*

March 1997: *Changes in Business Confidence Expressed In Numbers of New Incorporations*

October 1996: *Bankruptcies Rise With Self-Employment and Mounting Consumer Debt Loads*

July 1996: *Counting the Business Community in British Columbia*

March 1996 *Different Problems Faced By Large and Small Manufacturers*

February 1996 *Less Credit Extended in Small Business Loans*

December 1995 *British Columbia Shows Highest Business Turnover Rates in Canada*

November 1995 *New Incorporations Decline in Mid-Year, As Formations of Unincorporated Businesses Increase*

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/97	% change on one year ago
BC	3,943.9	1.9
Canada	30,377.8	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change on
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	one year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Nov	2,816	-2.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Nov	2,055	1.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Nov	2,731	0.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1986=100)	Dec '97	one year ago
BC	139.2	0.4
Canada	137.8	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '98	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,005	0.4
Employed - BC	1,818	-1.1
Unemployed - BC	187	16.7
		Jan '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.3	8.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.9	9.7
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 11/98	Feb 12/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.40	5.20
- 5 year	6.85	7.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 11/98	Feb 12/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4365	1.3554
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6961	0.7378
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Nov '97	one year ago
BC	615.25	-0.2
Canada	601.83	1.5

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Released this week by BC STATS
- Labour Force Statistics, January 1998

Next week
- Earnings & Employment Trends, Nov. 1997
- Tourism Room Revenue, October 1997

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